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AUTHOR	Edwards, Mary
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ABSTRACT

In this lesson, student teams research one of the species of early humans. Teams will create presentations that include information on physical traits, habitat, era, means of survival, culture, and relationship to modern humans. Students are provided with background information, detailed instructions, on-line resources, and reflection questions. The teacher's notes describe the unit's purpose, explain the application of history/social science and language arts standards, and suggest teaching strategies. (BT)

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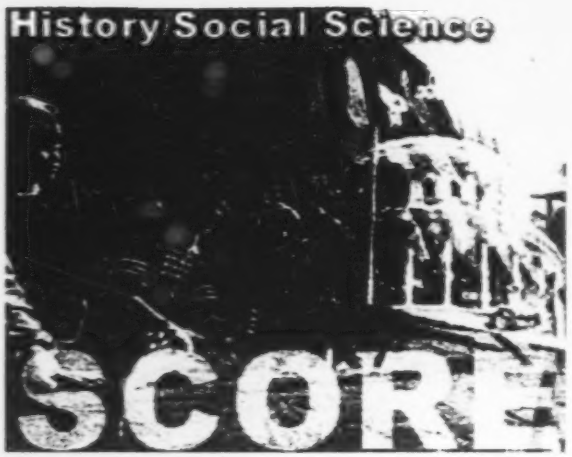

Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World

International Institute of Archaeology Anthropology

6th Grade Lesson by Mary Edwards

SCORE
San Berardino County Superintendent of Schools
601 North E. Street
San Bernardino, CA 92410-3093

http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/activity/archaeology/index.html

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Margaret Hill

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View Teacher notes

Image from "Petroglyphs & Rock paintings"

International Institute of Archaeology Anthropology

Early Human Culture

Are you aware of the recent discoveries about ancient humans? Through DNA research, scientists are suggesting that even though Neanderthal and modern man lived at the a time, they did not intermingle. As a result of recent discoveries in Zaire, scientists are suggesting humans in Africa were inventing sophisticated tools before humans in Europe, as was previously believed.

Anthropologists have discussed the development of humankind for many years. Information on early humans can only come from discovery of artifacts and fossils. The artifacts are analyzed and anthropologists make educated guesses as to what the items were used for.

Experts may have different viewpoints and come to different conclusions about early cultures. As new artifacts are discovered, the same experts continually adjust their ideas and change their theories about what they think happened thousands of years ago.

Were early humans uncivilized brutish creatures or intelligent caring individuals developing their cultures? What evidence can you find using the cultural universals as a reference? Did any of the species .nvent and use technology? Many examples of art have been found. What was the purpose of this art to the culture?

We are interested in hearing your findings and conclusions on these important topics. Our representatives look forward to hearing your presentations next month.

Sincerely,

The International Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology

Follow these steps carefully as you proceed with your research and presentation.

The Task
The Process
Resources
Learning and Research Advice
Evaluation
Conclusion
Reflection

The Task

You will work in a group to research one of the species of early humans. All members of your group will engage in research and a presentation of your findings to the International Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology representatives. You will be expected to present information about your species and explain your position on the following:

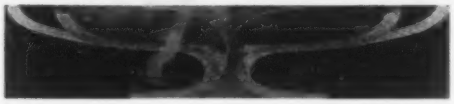
1. What are the physical features of your species? Include brain and skull size. How do they compare to the species preceding them and those that came after?
2. When and where did they live? Draw maps and create timelines.
3. How did they survive? What foods did they eat, what kinds of tools did they use, and what sort of shelters did they build?
4. What do you think their culture was like? Use the World Cultures Model to show evidence of your opinion.
5. In your opinion, what were their contributions to the development of human culture? Show evidence of your opinion.

The Process

Follow these steps carefully:

A. Each person will be responsible to research and share findings with their group.
B. As you research your species, gather information that will help you answer the first three questions. Be sure to take detailed notes from resources, download images and information from the Internet, always keeping track of where you got your information. Are there any films from the county film service you would like to get information (Use the "Big 6" or any report format to help you research and keep track of your search.)
C. After you have gathered your information, take your notes and put together a written report to share with your group complete with visuals, models, and any other aids you feel are necessary. (Before you begin your final draft, schedule an editing conference with your teacher.)
D. Present your findings to your group. As a group, you will now discuss your opinion on the remaining questions. Make sure you have a recorder to keep a record of your ideas.

E. Plan your presentation to the class and the IIAA. Your information needs to be well organized. Do you have plenty of visual aids to illustrate your information? Is there an activity you would like the class to participate in to have them experience what life was like for your species? You will be presenting the background information gathered in questions 1-3 as well as your group's opinion on questions 4-5. Show evidence for your conclusion. (You are giving your opinions on these topics which have no right or wrong answer. You must, however, show some evidence that has convinced you to think this way. Remember that the experts cannot agree on one answer to these questions. Maybe your group will come up with an entirely new idea!)



RESOURCES

You can go to the SCORE site to find information. The sites are hot linked from there so all you need to do is click on a site. When you reach the SCORE 6th grade list, click on Early Humans-Resources.

http://www.rims.k12.ca.us/SCORE/

Other information can be found at the following sites:

http://www.interlog.com/~jabram/elise/archmenu.htm

(Multiple hot links at this site.)

http://lrs.ed.uiuc.edu/students/b-sklar/fossils.html

(I have already searched the Net for sites so we are going to stick to these for our research time. If you have Internet at home and wish to search for additional sites, that would be wonderful.)

Your Social Studies textbook is an excellent resource for information. There are some books available in the classroom. Students are encouraged to bring any resources they have at home as well as make a trip to the library.

Resources for teachers:

http://www.lib.uconn.edu/ArchNet/ArchNet.html

LEARNING AND RESEARCH ADVICE

You will need to use information from a variety of resources. Make good use of books, Internet, films, magazines, and educational programs you might see on TV.

It is very important to work as a team on this assignment. The final product requires everyone's ideas and hard work. To finish on time you will need to spend time at home in addition to your regular homework assignments. Make sure all members are using their time wisely in and out of class!

EVALUATION

The whole class will develop a rubric to evaluate the group's research and presentation. Important elements of the rubric will be how well questions in The Task section were answered, group organization, the presentation itself, and the ability of the group to give evidence to support your opinion.

Image from "the Chauvet Cave"

CONCLUSION

After you have finished this activity, answer the following question:

Explain why you think it is important to learn about the cultures of Early Humans.

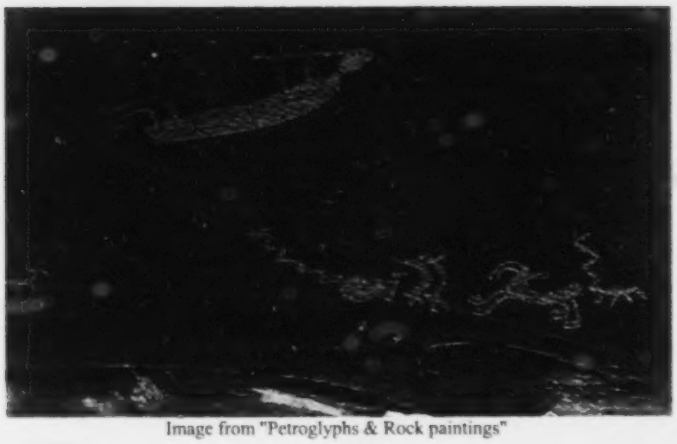


Image from "Petroglyphs & Rock paintings"

REFLECTION:

1. What did you learn during this activity that interested you the most?
2. How well did your group work together? How did you solve any problems that you did have? Why do you think group research is important for an activity like this?
3. Was it helpful to use the Internet site to complete your research? Would you use the Internet on a future project to find information?
4. Is there anything you would do differently next time you do an activity like this?

Teacher Notes

Goals/Purpose: After researching the species, students will write a formal report and present their findings to their group. They will discuss their findings, evaluate information provided by artifacts, and draw their own conclusions about the beginnings of culture. Each group will then present their findings to the whole class. Students will also require training in cooperative group process as well as information retrieval and synthesize.

H/SS Standards, Grade 6: Students describe what is known through archaeological studies of the early physical and cultural development of mankind from the Paleolithic Era to the agricultural revolution. They describe hunter-gatherer societies and their characteristics.

Language Arts Standards, Grade 6: Reading Comprehension: Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They connect and clarify main ideas, identifying their relationship to other sources and related topics; clarify understanding by

creating outlines, logical notes, summaries, or reports; determine the adequacy and appropriateness of an author's evidence for his or her conclusions; make reasonable assertions about text through accurate, supportive citations.

Writing Strategies: Students write persuasive compositions that state a clear position in support of a proposition or proposal; support the position with organized and relevant evidence; [and] use organizational features of electronic text (e.g., bulletin boards, databases, keyword searches, e-mail addresses) to locate information.

Listening and Speaking: Students deliver focused, coherent presentations that convey ideas clearly and relate to the background and interests of the audience. Students deliver well-organized formal presentations employing traditional rhetorical strategies (i.e.,...exposition, persuasion, and description). They provide a clear statement of the position; include relevant evidence; offer logical sequence of information; engage the listener and foster acceptance of the proposition or proposal. They deliver presentations theorizing on problems and solutions that establish connections among the situation, the postulated causes and effects, definition of the problem, and at least one solution, {and} offer evidence to validate the definition of the problem and the proposed solution(s).

Objectives:

- Students will be able to gather information, take notes, organize notes into a logical order and rewriteinformation in their own words.
- Students will able to produce and present a formal report with visuals.
- Students will work collaboratively with a group to share information an ideas.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast aspects of the different species.
- Students will evaluate artifacts and relate them to the cultural universals.
- Students will compare and contrast their ideas to ideas of other scientists.

Length: This project takes approximately 4 weeks, allowing approximately 7 hours per week in class and 2-3 hours out of class. When students are presenting their final conclusions to the whole class, invite a local anthropologist, archaeology lab (college or high school) plan a field trip. Notes and formal written reactions to the field trip can be placed in portfolios along with the written reports, pictures of projects, and visuals from the presentations.

Materials: Bring in a variety of books about Early Humans as well as the series from National Geographic. Many students have books at home that they are willing to share with classmates. Art supplies and poster board are needed for visuals.

Resources: SCORE sites provide some information on Early Humans. Many other sites on the Internet are too advanced for students, but provide information for the teacher.

Submitted by:

Mary Edwards
Little Chico Creek Elementary School
Chico USD

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